

Most Commonly Asked Questions about the Pharmacy

Everyone knows that Pharmacy fills prescriptions and dispenses medications, but not everyone is aware of many other services we can provide for our patients on a daily basis. Many patients are also concerned about safety and are curious about what system we use to make sure they get the right medication for their condition in a timely manner. Here some of the most frequently asked questions and answers about the Pharmacy.

1. **Who works in the Pharmacy?** Pharmacy Service is comprised of one military pharmacist, 67E, two military technicians, 91Q, and a stock control clerk assigned to the pharmacy from Logistics. The stock clerk is responsible for ordering all medications.
2. **What system does the Pharmacy use in daily operations?** Pharmacy Services utilizes the bank teller concept of dispensing medications to patients. This system allows us to keep waiting times, on average, to less than 5 minutes.
3. **What are the Pharmacy operating hours?** Pharmacy Services operating hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, including training holidays, from 07:30 – 16:30 hours and 12:30-16:30 on Thursdays. We are closed on weekends and federal holidays. Pharmacy is open during regular lunch hours.
4. **Besides filling prescriptions what other patient-oriented services does the Pharmacy provide?**
 - a. By utilizing the Composite Health Care System (CHCS) the Pharmacy is capable of automatic drug screening for duplicate medications, drug-drug interactions, allergies, patient medication profiles, medication class overlaps, and an interface with other DoD facilities in Japan (excluding Okinawa).
 - b. We provide patient education services with each prescription dispensed in the form of a monograph as well as by one on one counseling with the pharmacist or pharmacy technician. We encourage patients to call the pharmacy with any questions or concerns about their medications.
 - c. Call-in refill services are provided 24 hours a day. For the fastest service, refills should be called in (243-4689) or (046-821-1911, extension 243-4689). This number is located on the upper right hand corner of your prescription label. If refills are called in before 13:00 they will be ready for pick up the same day. Please allow 2 hours for filling and checking by our staff after the refill is called in. Refills can be called in up to 5 working days in advance.

d. Due to the interfacing of the CHCS computer system, prescriptions originally filled at other DoD facilities in Japan may be refilled at our pharmacy if the medication is on our formulary.

5. **How do I get my prescription after I have seen my provider?** After you have seen a practitioner at Camp Zama and you are to receive prescriptions, go directly to the pharmacy window and tell the pharmacy personnel that you have seen the practitioner. Pharmacy personnel will fill your prescriptions as you wait at the window. If your prescriptions have not arrived at the pharmacy yet, pharmacy personnel will give you a number and ask you to have a seat in the waiting area and will call your number as soon as your prescription is ready. Patients have a maximum of 3 working days to pick up for Schedule II controlled substances and at least 7 working days for all other medications.

6. **How long is a prescription valid?** Federal Law prohibits the dispensing of medication after one year even if you have not used all of your refills. Prescriptions for controlled substances are good for 6 months. Your practitioner must enter new prescriptions when these periods are elapsed. The computer system will not allow us to run refills for prescriptions that have expired. We can do a courtesy refill from a prescription (for non controlled substances only) that is current and has refills from another treatment facility if we stock the medication. Unfortunately, we are unable to refill prescriptions that are not from a military treatment facility.

7. **What can I do as a patient to reduce the chance of a medication error?** We strive constantly to provide an error-free service to our patients; however, we are human. If you suspect that anything is wrong with your medications or prescriptions, let us know immediately so that we can make sure you have the right medication. Always look at your medications and label before you leave the pharmacy. If it looks different than the last time you received the medication please ask the pharmacy personnel if you have received the correct medication.

8. **What is the purpose of the little yellow stickers on your medication vials?** These are auxiliary labels. On most prescriptions you receive you will notice “stickers or labels” on the side of the prescription label giving you additional instructions. These labels intended to enhance or elaborate your physician’s instructions. Please read them carefully.

9. **How can I tell how many refills I have?** When your provider authorizes refills on your medication it will be annotated on the bottom of your label. It will read as follows: 3 of 3. This means your provider authorized you 3 refills and you have 3 refills remaining and will not need a new prescription until you have 0 of 3 refills.

10. **What is the maximum quantity of medication I can get at one time?** A maximum of 90-day supply can be issued for maintenance medications. Only a 30-day supply of controlled substances may be dispensed at one time (exceptions are made for medications prescribed for certain chronic conditions such as ADHD)

11. **What medications are included on your Formulary?** Our Pharmacy has a limited budget, and storage capacity, and we must follow DoD guidance and stock only DoD contracted medications. For these reasons we are unable to stock more than 1 or 2 medications in each drug class. If you are under another military practitioner's care, please make sure they know you are from Camp Zama. Our formulary is not as extensive as that of the larger MTFs in this area. If you receive a prescription from another military practitioner, please pick up the initial prescription at the originating hospital's pharmacy. We receive all of our medications from United States, and it takes us 7-10 days to receive non-controlled substances and up to 21 days or longer for schedule II controlled medications.

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